

Board of Trustees
Suffolk County Department of Parks
Recreation and Conservation
Minutes of June 15, 2006 at Meadow Edge, West Sayville

**BOARD MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

Ray Corwin	Chairman, Member at Large
Aurielo Colina	Vice Chairman, Town of Southampton
Richard F. White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton
John Fritz	Trustee, Town of Babylon
Miles Borden	Trustee, Town of Smithtown
Gregory Dawson	Trustee, Town of Islip
Gary Olsen	Trustee, Town of Brookhaven
Gil Cardillo	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Terrence Pearsall	Member of the Board

ABSENT:

Alexander McKay	Trustee, Town of Huntington
Jeanine Dillon	Member of the Board
Vacant	Trustee, Town of Southold
Vacant	Trustee, Town of Shelter Island

PARKS DEPARTMENT:

Ronald F. Foley	Commissioner
Colleen Hofmeister	Contracts Manager
William B. Sickles	Senior Parks Superintendent
Tom Hroncich	Marketing Specialist
Stacey A. Kowalski	Secretary to the Commissioner

GUESTS:

Honorable William J. Lindsay	Presiding Officer, Suffolk County Legislator
Lauretta Fischer	Principal Environmental Analyst, Planning Department
Janet Longo	Assistant Director of Planning
Jennifer Kohn	Assistant County Attorney
Carrie Meek Gallagher	Deputy Director of Planning
Margo Myles	Town of Huntington Planning & Environment

CORRECTIONS TO THE MINUTES OF MAY 18, 2006:

Page 5 – Under Third House – Change Montauk Fire Department to Montauk Fire District.

Page 5 – Under Third House – Change the installation of the cell tower at the GATR site to the installation of a cell pole and an emergency communications pole.

Page 6 – Under Shagwong – Change Oyster Pines to Oyster Pond

Page 8 – Under Invasive Species – Add or the result of planting for erosion control on the slope.

A motion to accept minutes as corrected by Trustee White, seconded by Trustee Fritz and motion passed 9-0-0.

PRESIDING OFFICER, WILLIAM J. LINDSAY, SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR:

Thank you to all the Trustees for the time you devote to our Park system. Many good things are done in Suffolk County because ordinary citizens volunteer their time so willingly to make government work. Legislator Lindsay is appreciative and would like to compliment Commissioner Foley for the wonderful job he does at the Parks Department. We continue to acquire more property and the demands for recreational activities of all sorts are numerous. Commissioner Foley keeps all things together without adding more staff which is a magic act. As an example, last week we were at the re-opening of Raynor Park in Ronkonkoma in bad weather. The project was a difficult one but it turned out beautiful. If anyone hasn't been there, Legislator Lindsay would strongly suggest stopping by. Raynor Park sits on a bluff above Lake Ronkonkoma and is probably one of our most beautiful parks.

Earlier this week, Legislator Lindsay was at the Loughlin Vineyards in Sayville. We finally after four years have acquired half of the property and development rights. The other day in the Legislature we had a busy day with a lot of people, and one of the main issues was Trap & Skeet in Yaphank. It is a controversial issue. Legislator Lindsay salutes the Commissioner and supports the Parks Trustees for the work they do.

Trustee Corwin appreciates the kind words. We certainly recognize the Commissioner's outstanding abilities as well. Trustee Corwin is completely 100% biased but we certainly have one of the finest County Parks system in the country.

Commissioner Foley pointed out that it is a great team of Parks employees that keeps things together and the public well served.

PLANNING AND REAL ESTATE:

Lauretta Fischer presented the following acquisitions:

Overton Preserve – It is a 20.3 acre lot on the east side of this area and has come before you before with approximately 400 acres. The County is doing a Partnership with the Town of Brookhaven, and the piece we are acquiring is 20.3 acres. We are using funds from the Multi-Faceted Land Preservation Program under the Land Preservation Partnership Program. The County is doing a 50/50 match with the Town of Brookhaven and this will be for passive recreation. There is a Coram airfield parcel just to the north of this outlined area in dark blue (referring to a handout) which we acquired five or six years ago.

Trustee Colina asked Ms. Fischer what is the oval track on the handout. Ms. Fischer stated in between there is a horse farm.

Trustee Fritz asked Ms. Fischer what is the dotted line on the handout? Ms. Fischer said we are delineating out a portion of the property where a residence exists and we are not acquiring the entire piece. We are just acquiring 20.3 acres.

Trustee Corwin asked Ms. Fischer if it would be a subdivision. Ms. Fischer stated a lot division.

Trustee Corwin asked if there was any direct access to go through the Coram airfield? Ms. Fischer stated we do have road access, it just is not shown on the handout. Trustee Corwin asked would it be for parking lot access or would it just be for maintenance vehicles to get in such as a flag

lot. Ms. Fischer feels the access is sufficient from Mill Road from our existing property. Trustee Corwin asked about emergency access so that you don't have to drive around the horse farm to get some place. Ms. Longo stated we are negotiating the horse farm under a different program. Trustee Colina asked if they will acquire the horse farm, too. Ms. Longo stated the development rights.

Motion to recommend the acquisition by Trustee Dawson and seconded by Trustee Colina. The motion passed by a unanimous vote of 9-0-0.

Mohlenhoff Property – We are sending around two handouts one an aerial view of the area and a site plan provided by the Town of Huntington. Margo Miles of the Town of Huntington Planning & Environment is here to discuss the proposed use. As an introduction to this acquisition, we are looking to do a 50/50 match with the Town of Huntington. The future use of this park will be for active recreation and the Town of Huntington will be responsible for the improvements, maintenance and cleanup of the property.

Ms. Miles presented the following:

The Mohlenhoff acquisition is the former Mohlenhoff nursery which has been in operation for over 60 years.

There is a great deal of infrastructure on the property which the Town will be responsible for. The Town will be demolishing 23 structures on the property including three buildings, three houses, garage, flower shop, greenhouses and various sheds. It is a site that because of its intensity of use as a nursery, we have given a hard look at its use. The Town has taken a hard look at the property and its past uses and looked at the Phase I and Phase II.

The Town has done some soil sampling and there are some recommendations for soil remediation. The Town will be working very closely with Suffolk County and has asked for help of the Health Services Department and Drinking Water Protection to work forward their remediation protocol. The Town's plan is to have two very large synthetic turf fields which will be lit and provide parking. If you look at the site plan, the parking area and the two synthetic fields basically span the same area where most of the buildings and other infrastructures located. We are proposing a concession restroom building with a grandstand with storage underneath, a children's playground and two grass fields. On the two acre component of the site, we are proposing to leave the open space to have a walking trail. We will probably be maintaining more of a meadow cover to have an open view across the area. The plan is to hold this component right now as a future parking area. If we feel there is a demand for additional parking, this is where it would go.

The Town will be working with the County to lay out a remediation plan. There are definitely going to be areas of this site where we will be removing soils. In some areas, we will be looking to encapsulate the soil more to limit contact. At the playground, we are going to be using special rubberized tiles underneath in terms of any soils that might be questionable. The tiles will provide a better barrier. We will be doing more testing as we go forward as we start removing buildings and concrete on the site. Once we get that material out, we will have to do additional testing.

The Town is very excited about this project. There is a very active soccer league and lacrosse club in the area. They both have been clamoring for new fields. The Cold Spring Harbor Soccer League has already pledged a minimum of \$500,000 in writing for construction. The Huntington Lacrosse Club has also told us they will be contributing toward these fields. With the synthetic fields, the lines are actually sewn right into the fields themselves. The fields won't have to be relined.

Trustee Colina asked Ms. Miles if there were any wells on the property. Ms. Miles stated there are no wells. Trustee Colina asked if the soil has been contaminated by farmer's use of pesticides. Ms. Miles replied there are some residual contaminants which have shown in testing.

Trustee Corwin asked Ms. Miles if there was a fee for the individual uses of a soccer club or team to use the fields. Ms. Miles believes there is a fee and it would be the same whether you live in Huntington or outside the town.

Trustee Fritz asked if a group of friends wanted to use the field for soccer, do they need a permit from the Town if the field is not being used. Ms. Miles believes it would be like most of our parks – if it is not a league playing an organized game, the facilities are available to the Public. Ms. Miles states that this is the first time we will be installing synthetic fields so we will have to work out the policies as we go forward.

Commissioner Foley addressed a question to Ms. Longo. Trustee McKay wanted to know if anything was going to be done about the encroachment by the Mohlenoff Farms on the Frolich Farm property. Mohlenhoff has gotten some beneficial use of public lands and Trustee McKay wants to know what will be done about it. Ms. Longo stated as far as an acquisition goes, our acquisition is for the value of property we are purchasing. Ms. Longo states the encroachment had nothing to do with the value of the parcel. Trustee Corwin stated once you buy the property and develop it as a park, encroachment would not be an issue.

Ms. Fischer commented that the acquisition was brought before CEQ and was approved. CEQ reviewed the use plan.

Motion to recommend the acquisition by Trustee Colina and seconded by Trustee Borden. The motion passed by a unanimous vote of 9-0-0.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:

2007 Operating Budget - This budget handout is in response to the budget call letter from the County Executive Budget Office for the 2007 Operating Budget. It is provided for information only. There is no requirement in the charter for trustees to approve it or take any action. At this time or at a subsequent meeting, I'd be happy to answer any questions. The instructions were to present a 0% increase and a second budget to show a 2% increase. We adhered to the instructions.

Trustee Colina asked a question about Page 7 of 11, Form 1A2007. Where is Bergen Point Golf Course? Commissioner Foley stated Bergen Point is not part of our operating budget; that it is concessioned out to Global golf. We do not have any operating expenditures attributable to that, but we do receive revenue from Bergen Point.

Please call me at any time with any questions with regard to the 2007 budget. Trustee Corwin appreciates the effort.

Trap & Skeet - We are still on a schedule to open on July 1. We still have a lot of work to do but our target is to open July 1.

Raynor County Beach Park - As you heard earlier from the Presiding Officer, Raynor Beach County Park is open for public use. The restroom building is not yet complete. There were problems with the contractor who is not complying with DPW demands to complete things. There are some amenities that we will still be in need of in the future. Local residents have complained

about the lack of sidewalk along Ronkonkoma Avenue which is a town avenue. For those people who do not walk there, there needs to be more parking. We need to scope out the cost of adding parking. We need some internal fencing there to separate the soccer field from the playgrounds. There are small things we will be looking for funds for in the future.

Third House - It is underway. There are blue tarps on the roof and old roofing coming off. The County Executive will be there on June 29 to break ground on the project.

Golf - Generally, we started off great. We had a terrific April startup. The rounds were up, revenue was up and the weather in May has just spoiled it. It has taken golf back down below historic numbers. When it rains continuously for many days at a time, the play drops off.

Southaven Stables - We are going to have Colleen Hofmeister in the Contracts Unit craft a request for expressions of interest. The expressions of interest will be for businesses interested in that type of facility to tell us what is needed in this area of Suffolk County. There seems to be an unknown balance between show facilities and public riding. We would like businesses experienced in stables to come and tell us what works. From that information, we will develop an RFP.

Trustee Cardillo asked are you looking for input from the horse community? Commissioner Foley replied yes, in a formalized process. Ms. Hofmeister will advertise a request for expressions of interest. From the experience we have had, different parts of the county have different markets. There is a market in Western Suffolk but as you go further East, more people have enough real estate to deal with boarding on their own. We want someone to look at the Yaphank Southaven area to see if they can survive in that market. A complication at Southaven is the horse show activity at the County Farm run by Cornell Cooperative Extension. We will also be limited, to some extent, by the Pine Barrens regulations. This process that Ms. Hofmeister will kickoff will inform them of all the prevailing rules, regulations and laws. After that, they will have to come back to us with something that fits into the environmental regulations.

Dog Owners - We are continuing to work with people who own dogs in Huntington trying to scope out the size and shape of an area for a fenced dog run at West Hills. There is currently a dog run at West Hills that the dog community says is too small, too sloped, too overused. There is a two acre standard that is evolving across the country. At West Hills, I don't think we can get two acres. We are going to do this because there is a public outdoor recreational value. We can have a division for an area for small dogs vs. big dogs. The dog owners would like some shaded areas, open areas, doggy drinking fountains, and a bulletin board. We are pursuing a cooperative venture to supervise and patrol the dogs with a volunteer group. I anticipate that we will have some license agreement with this Huntington dog owners group. The care and stewardship of the dog run will be their responsibility.

Indian Island - I didn't mean to be impertinent with Trustee Colina about changing the minutes relative to Indian Island. Trustee Colina mentioned the over trimming. I looked at it and walked it with Will Maxwell and Mike Rothang. They pointed out the problems they were having with insect intrusion. I think they did what they needed to do to improve the health of that green. It was a judgment call. They convinced me that some of what they did was necessary to manage the golf course properly. I'm not going to involve myself in every detail of management of the golf course. We hire very good people who are well educated in golf course management. At any time you have a problem with a decision, we will investigate it and see if remediation is appropriate.

Flooding - In the Chairman's Report, Trustee Chairman Corwin would like to thank Trustee Borden and Trustee Fritz for being at the June 7 Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting. Trustee Corwin said the issue that was looming at the meeting was the problem that

homeowners in the Smithtown area were having with flooding. Depending on one's perspective, the flooding is attributable to what is being done or not being done at Miller's Pond and related waterways. There were some historical perspectives from some of the speakers about flooding in that area going back to 80 years. In one case, a gentleman said he had been in his house 80 years and there has always been a wetland problem. Legislative Nowick tried to capitalize on that observation to explain that perhaps there was too much development in a saturated wetland area. It was not met with general approval. There was some concern that the County should allocate some money and do something.

Commissioner Foley said it is an emotional, distressing situation that those people are in. Their basements are wet and their septic systems are overflowing. In some cases, their lawns are underwater all the time. Miller's Pond is a man made pond with a dam that has a series of boards in it. By removing or replacing the boards, we can regulate the height of that body of water. It is also true that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is the official regulator of the levels of fresh water bodies on Long Island. As people do, they directly attribute the level of the pond to the water in their basement.

People with flooded basements looked at Miller's Pond because it looked higher than it should be and fired off letters to the world. One of those letters got to DEC who said the Parks Department does not have a permit to do anything. We applied for a permit and the permit allows us to regulate the dam to maintain the traditional level of Miller's Pond as defined by the vegetation line around the Pond. People who thought our application was going to somehow get the Parks Department to lower the level of the Pond or drain the Pond were hopeful but not correct. The relationship of that stream and that Pond with what is going on with groundwater is very small. Department of Public Works has tested some monitoring wells and has said groundwater elevation in that area is at a 30 year high. Some time in the early 80's, an engineering firm did a study of the entire area and produced a three volume report. Apparently, the report made a number of recommendations on solutions. In the report, there are a collective number of solutions that go into millions of dollars in which high volume pumps would move the groundwater from one area to another. The people want action and want something to happen now. The County in cooperation with the Town is reviewing the report for a solution.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS:

RFP for Canoe Concessions -- Ms. Hofmeister informed the Board that there are four contracts which have expired. We are looking to get four concessionaires on board for a period of five years. The four locations are Southaven Park, two at Paul T. Gibbon Park and one at Cedar Point Park. There is a standard operating procedure which states that Trustees have to approve the proposed RFP.

Motion to approve the RFP by Trustee Borden and seconded by Trustee Colina. The motion passed by a unanimous vote of 9-0-0.

Miller's Pond -- Trustee Borden is pleased with the reports in the local newspapers and the follow up of the Miller's Pond problem.

GATR Site -- After five years, Trustee White is delighted to report that there is a proposed contract between Montauk Fire District and the Suffolk County Parks for the GATR site communication poles. Trustee Corwin stated it has been a long road and he would like to acknowledge the County Attorney's office for their help. Trustee Colina feels Trustee White deserves a lot of credit for sticking with it. Trustee White thanked the Commissioner.

Smith Point Pier -- Trustee Fritz asked the status of the fishing pier. Commissioner Foley has not

heard anything new since last month.

Route 105 Access -- Trustee Fritz inquired about access under the bridge. Commissioner Foley, Mr. Gibbons and Mr. Sickles looked at it and think there are some possibilities. We need to talk to DPW to see if they agree.

Montauk County Park Campground -- Trustee Fritz inquired about the status of the environmental review at Montauk County Park Campground. Commissioner Foley said we agreed to do the review and Mr. Gibbons has it on his list.

Swan Lake in Patchogue -- Trustee Fritz asked if access was available at Swan Lake if you didn't live in the area. A parking field has been put in by the Town of Brookhaven for about twenty cars on Lake Drive.

Due to the fact Trustee Colina was absent at the May Trustee meeting, he wanted to make the following comment:

Trustee Colina raised the question about the trimming that was completed at Indian Island on the 11th hole. The 11th hole is a relatively short par 3-195 yard hole. On the left hand side, there is a tree line that goes along the property line. There is a chain link fence which I never knew was there until this trimming took place. There was a lot of natural vegetation that had grown in front of the fence almost the entire length. There are large mature trees also along the left side of the fairway. It stated on page 6 that they had a situation out there that there was not enough air circulation. They cleared underbrush that provided a natural screening which made it for an aesthetically pleasing view. Now you are looking in people's backyards and seeing a rusting washing machine, rusting old trucks on the other side of the chain link fence. If you are going to provide air circulation for a green, you remove the trees that are in the immediate vicinity, you don't clear the underbrush. I can understand the need for standing up for your staff, but Trustee Colina is into golfing and I always said Indian Island Golf Course is the crown jewel of the County golf courses. Indian Island has some of the prettiest holes you will find anywhere in the country. Trustee Colina would disagree with the comment that the underbrush clearance was the right decision. Most of the underbrush they removed was at least 50 yards away from the green and not higher than four or five feet. Trustee Colina disagrees with the Commissioner.

On Page 6 of the May minutes, Trustee Colina agreed with Trustee Cardillo in talking about the horse farm. We need an update on what is happening on Sears Bellows. Trustee Colina's recommendation to donate the structures to the Southampton Fire Department was not adopted and he wanted to let the Trustees know that he agreed with Trustee Cardillo with regard to the minutes.

William Sickles -- Trustee Colina would like to congratulate Bill Sickles on being a recipient of a National Lifetime Award from the National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials. Trustee Colina stated it was well deserved and best wishes for continued success.

DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT MEETING:

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, July 20 at Cupsogue Beach Hut at 1:00 pm. Lunch will be served at 12 noon.

The motion to adjourn was made by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee Colina.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Stacey Kowalski.